

11 Ideas for a Fun Summer with Your Kids



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The summer can be a tricky time for parents. What will you do with your kids when their days are completely and utterly free?

What if you can't afford camp? What if they forget everything they've learned?

According to [Charlotte Reznick](#), Ph.D, a child educational psychologist and UCLA professor, the best thing parents can do is to focus on fun. The summer is an opportunity for parents to bond with their kids – and for kids to enjoy a true vacation.

Below are 11 tips on how to do just that. Big budgets and many hours are **not** required.

1. Do what works for your family.

As Reznick said, “Each family is unique,” and parents know the activities that suit their family’s needs. For instance, your family might bond over pillow fights, or such games might cause real fights, she said.

2. Brainstorm ideas together.

Ask your kids about the fun activities they’d like to do this summer. “Think of [activities] that might be out of the ordinary, said Reznick, who’s also author of *The Power of Your Child’s Imagination: How to Transform Stress and Anxiety into Joy and Success*. List your ideas on a chalkboard or erasable board, she said. You can even create a mind map with your ideas, she added.

3. Make playtime a priority.

“Make sure you’re having fun every day,” Reznick said. Even if it’s just 30 minutes a day, make the most of your time together.

4. Take advantage of where you live.

Summer is the perfect time to be outside, Reznick said. If your hometown has a beach, bask in the sun and build sandcastles together. If it has lakes, go and enjoy the water. If your hometown hosts county fairs, find out the next date. Many cities also offer free concerts in the park and other kid-friendly activities at museums and libraries. Reznick suggested Googling family activities in your area.

5. Make everyday activities fun.

As a parent, you no doubt have a long list of chores, including repairs around the house and home-cooked meals. Engage your kids in these everyday activities.

Need to fix a shelf? Rather than presenting it as a boring burden, Reznick suggested saying something like, “Wow, we get to build a shelf together. What colors should we pick? You can help me stain it.”

Search for creative recipes together or make every day or once a week a theme night, she said. Have your kids join you at the grocery store and help you prepare your meals, too, she said.

6. Be spontaneous.

Do something you wouldn’t normally do, Reznick said. For instance, surprise your kids by taking the day off (or coming home a few hours early) and driving to the beach, she said. Or take a walk in the warm rain, she said, and play in the puddles.

7. Create your own camp.

According to Reznick, many families participate in mommy and daddy camps. For one day, parents take turns and take each other’s kids on different excursions. This way, the kids have fun being out and about, and every parent gets a rest.

8. Don’t discount your home.

It’s a great place to enjoy fun — and *free!* — activities. Play board games (just keep the focus on enjoyment, not competition); put the music on and dance; create your own show; have a beauty day; and camp out in your backyard, spotting the stars, Reznick said.

9. Connect to your inner child.

“Remember what it was like when you were a kid and the fun things you used to like to do,” Reznick said.

10. Involve your kids in artful activities.

Creativity coach [Gail McMeekin](#) suggested families create scrapbooks, wall displays, digital books or multimedia productions with family photos, school papers, awards, mementos or videos.

Also, kids can create their own projects and capture their happiest family moments or the most important days in their lives, she said.

11. Encourage your kids to set up small businesses.

“Since so many young people will become entrepreneurs in the future, having them set up small businesses, like lemonade stands or toy exchanges or selling something they love or assist you with your biz, can be inspiring and great learning opportunities,” McMeekin said.

What are some of the fun things you have planned with your kids this summer?

Please share your own ideas in the comments section!

Margarita Tartakovsky, M.S. is an Associate Editor at Psych Central and blogs regularly about eating and self-image issues on her own blog, [Weightless](#).

